

RURAL DISTRICT COUNCIL OF WELLS.

Report of Medical Officer of Health for 1902.

STREET, SOMERSET,
JANUARY 22nd, 1903.

To the Rural District Council of Wells.

MR. CHAIRMAN AND GENTLEMEN,

I have the honour to submit my report for the year ended December 31st, 1902.

Area. 58,212 Acres.

Population. Census 1901—10,758.

Geology. Dolomitic conglomerate at Chewton and Westbury ; mountain limestone at Priddy ; red marl at Dinder, North Wootton and Rodney Stoke ; red marl and river gravel at Wookey ; lower lias at West Pennard, Baltonsborough, Butleigh and Walton ; alluvium and peat at Glastonbury Moor.

Occupation. Chiefly agricultural, cheese and cider making. Paper factories. Some of the inhabitants at Butleigh and Walton work at shoe, leather, and skin factories at Street and Glastonbury, and at the quarries at Street.

Birth Rate. 219 births registered (103 males, 116 females), giving a birth rate of 20.3 per 1000 per annum.

Death Rate. 205 deaths registered (109 males, 96 females), giving a death rate of 19.05 per 1000 per annum. 87 deaths occurred at the Somerset and Bath County Asylum at Wells. Deducting these, the corrected death rate for the Rural District is 10.9 per 1000 per annum.

Zymotic Death Rate. Two deaths registered from zymotic disease, giving zymotic rate of 0.18 per 1000 per annum.

Infant Mortality. Infant mortality per 1000 births is 45.6 ; 10 deaths under one year being registered.

FOR THE YEAR 1901.					
Birth Rate.	Birth Rate	...	per 1000 living	...	20.07
Death Rate.	Death Rate	...	" "	...	21.1
Corrected Death Rate.	Corrected Death Rate	...	" "	...	13.6
Zymotic Rate.	Zymotic Rate	...	" "	...	1.02
Infant Mortality.	Infant Mortality	...	per 1000 births	...	74.07

Water Supply The water supply of the District varies considerably, some of the parishes having a fairly good supply, others being sadly deficient.

BALTONSBOROUGH.—The supply for this parish is most unsatisfactory, being taken either from the river or open pools in the district. Several schemes have been suggested for a new supply, but owing either to their costliness or impracticability have so far fallen through.

WEST PENNARD.—Some of the houses in this district have a good supply from the Glastonbury Corporation Service ; that for others being obtained either from open pools or the river, is unsatisfactory. Communications have passed between the Rural District Council and the Glastonbury Corporation relative to the extending of their main to the Woodlands District—as yet, however, without definite result. A polluted well in this district (Pennard), has been closed by the Rural District Council.

GODNEY.—Arrangements have been made with the Urban District Council of Street under their Act, for the supply of this district. The works will shortly commence, and before long this most needed supply will be assured.

WEST HORRINGTON.—The scheme for the extended supply of this district is now awaiting the sanction of the Local Government Board.

The supply for SHARPHAM is drawn either from the ditches or the canal, both sources of a dangerous character. Owing to the houses in this locality being so scattered, rain-water tanks appear to be the most feasible means of supply.

The supply for part of the MEARE district is unsatisfactory, being drawn from the rhine or from wells, where the danger of pollution is great.

At DRAYCOT, RODNEY STOKE, PRIDDY and CHEWTON MENDIP, the supply is good.

At BUTLEIGH the resident landowner has provided large storage tanks, from which water is laid on to houses in the village.

I have examined a number of samples of well water during the year.

**Sewerage and
Drainage.**

No general system of drainage exists in the district. Privies with cesspits are most in use, which being emptied only at long intervals and at times draining into an adjoining ditch or water course, are a source of danger. In parts of the district there are a number of dry earth closets in use, and when practicable this system is encouraged.

The septic tank system having been introduced in connection with the Wells Sewage Works—the pollution of the stream near Coxley from this source has now ceased—the effluent being satisfactory.

I have on several occasions inspected this and other streams in the district.

I have also visited a number of premises where defective sanitation existed (in connection with notified cases of disease.) These have been reported to and dealt with by the Rural District Council.

**Prevalence of
Disease.**

Fifty-seven cases of scarlatina have been notified during the year, 29 of which have occurred at Chewton Mendip, 15 in the Wells (Out) District, two at Rodney Stoke, one at Priddy, three at Meare, five at Butleigh, two at Baltonsborough, and one at Walton. In April the public school was closed at Butleigh, a case having occurred at the school-house. In March and September the public school at Chewton Mendip was closed owing to the prevalence of this disease. The repeated outbreaks of the disease in this locality during the year have occasioned considerable anxiety. I have visited the premises in each case, accompanied by the nuisance inspector, and as far as possible isolation has been enforced and thorough disinfection afterwards carried out.

Thirteen cases of diphtheria have been notified during the year: One in the Wells (Out) District, three at Rodney Stoke, and nine at Meare. Excepting that in the Wells (Out) District, deficient sanitation coupled in some instances with a polluted water supply have, in my opinion, been the cause of the disease in each case.

Six cases of Erysipelas have been notified, four in the Wells (Out) District, one at Rodney Stoke, and one at Chewton Mendip.

Measles has prevailed in epidemic form during the latter part of the year at Wookey Hole, Easton and Westbury. The public School has been closed for a period at each place.

On March 6th, having received a communication that two persons who had been in contact with a small-pox case had removed to this district, a cottage in an isolated part of the district was secured by the Council in case of an outbreak of this disease. The people were placed in quarantine, their clothing and effects being disinfected. Fortunately no outbreak occurred. The cottage is still retained by the Rural District Council, but its inaccessibility precludes its use for general isolation purposes.

Factory and Work-shops Act, 1901.

Inspections have been made under this Act by the Inspectors of Nuisances of the District, and where necessary by myself. Registers of Workshops have been compiled, and the various factories and workshops have been visited and reported upon to the Rural District Council with regard to the sanitation, ventilation, means of escape in case of fire, and the provision of suitable sanitary conveniences. Lists of outworkers have been forwarded by the large employers of the district, and the places visited by the Inspectors,

Table of Deaths.

Ages Table of deaths :—

Under 1 year there were 10 deaths					
1	and under 5 years	„	4	„	
5	„	„	15	„	6
15	„	„	25	„	11
25	„	„	65	„	86
65	and upwards	„	„	88	„

Causes of Death.

Causes of Death in the district :—

Diphtheria	...	...	...	...	2
Enteritis	...	...	...	...	1
Phthisis	...	..	...	...	16
Cancer	...	...	...	...	15
Bronchitis	...	...	...	...	9
Pneumonia	...	...	...	...	14
Other Diseases of the Respiratory Organs	...				5
Alcoholism—Cirrhosis of Liver	...		...		3
Venereal Disease	...		...		1
Premature Birth	...		...		1
Diseases and Accidents of Parturition			...		1
Heart Diseases		...	...	...	25
Accidents	...	...	...	...	4
Suicide	..	...	...	...	1
All other causes	...	...	..		105

Isolation Hospital

None. The provision of one strongly recommended.

Disinfection Means.

Fumigation by sulphur candles.

Housing of the Working Classes.

Visits paid with the Inspectors. Two cases of overcrowding reported upon and dealt with.

General Inspection.

Slaughter-houses, Bake-houses, and Public Schools visited and inspected.

Bye-Laws.

None. A suitable code required.

I append Tables of Statistics together with Reports of the Sanitary Inspectors, to whose co-operation I am again greatly indebted.

I have the honour to be,

Mr. Chairman and Gentlemen,

Your obedient Servant,

GEORGE W. EGLINTON.

DISTRICT No. 1.

I beg to present my Report for the year ended 31st December, 1902.

During the year I have endeavoured to carry out the duties prescribed by the Local Government Board for an Inspector of Nuisances ; attended all Meetings of the Council to receive your instructions, and carried out instructions of the Medical Officer of Health for the prevention of the spread of Infectious Disease, &c.

The following is a summary of the cases reported to the Council from time to time, and dealt with by order :—

	No. of Cases.
Nuisances arising from foul and choked drains, foul accumulations, &c. ...	42
Animals so kept as to be a nuisance	2
Houses with insufficient privy accomodation	15
Houses overcrowded	2
Infected Dwellings : Occupiers served with notice as to isolation and disinfection (supplied with disinfectants by the Council)	25
Dwellings and clothing disinfected as directed by the Medical Officer of Health ...	23
Public school premises disinfected as directed by the Medical Officer of Health	4
New sewers laid and old ones repaired	3
New drains laid and old ones repaired	10
Bake-houses, slaughter-houses, and public schools inspected (no bye-laws in force)	26
Slaughter-houses in unsanitary condition dealt with	2
Dilapidated and dangerous buildings repaired	3
Pollution of streams	5
New dwellings erected for which certificates of occupation have been granted by the Council	11
Formal notices served by the Inspector	76

In addition to the above I have made a large number of inspections, and given verbal notice to abate nuisances in my rounds and visits.

I have also made a house-to-house inspection of East Horrington to inquire into the water supply.

I have also carried out the duties pertaining to an Inspector of Nuisances under the Factory and Workshops Act, 1901, and made a special report thereon.

PHILIP WILLIAMS,
Inspector No. 1 District.

DISTRICT No. 2.

During the year I have again endeavoured to carry out the instructions of the Local Government Board Order prescribing the duties of Insjectors of Nuisances ; reported to, and attended all meetings of the Council, and carried out their instructions, and also the directions of the Medical Officer of Health for the prevention and spread of Infectious Disease.

The following is a summary of cases reported by me to the Council, and dealt with by order :—

	No. of Cases.
Nuisances arising from foul and choked drains and privies, foul accumulations, &c. ...	12
Infected dwellings : Occupiers served with notices as to isolation of patients, and disinfection of dwellings, clothing, &c.	18
Dwellings, clothing, &c., disinfected under the direction of the Medical Officer of Health	18
Old sewers cleansed and repaired	2
Dilapidated and dangerous buildings demolished	1
New drains laid (by order)	3
New dwellings inspected for granting certificates for occupation—water and sanitary arrangements satisfactory	2
Dwellings reported unfit for human habitation—notices served and occupation discontinued	2
Samples of water submitted to Medical Officer of Health	2
Animals so kept as to be a nuisance	2
Dwellings without a wholesome supply of water—a good supply provided in two cases, the other two cases under order to provide a supply	4
Bake-houses, slaughter-houses, and offices of public schools inspected (no bye-laws in force)	23
School premises disinfected after infectious disease	1
Formal notices served	37
As directed by the Council, I have also made an inspection of the District under the " Factory and Workshops Act, 1901," and prepared the Register of Workshops directed to be kept by the Council. Several notices have been served under this Act, the majority of which have been complied with. The number of work-places registered being	97

In consequence of the importation into the District of two persons who had been in close contact with small-pox, and acting under the instructions of the Council and the direction of the Medical Officer of Health, I duly made arrangements as to isolation, disinfection, &c., of the persons, as well as the provision of two (adjoining) cottages as an Isolation Hospital, to be used in the event of the necessity arising.

In addition to the above a large number of inspections and re-inspections, both in respect of nuisances and water supplies, have been made, and verbal notices given in my rounds and periodical visits.

EDWIN H. PADFIELD,
Inspector No. 2 District.